

**SOME UNCOMMON BEETLES FROM
HEADLEY WARREN,
SURREY**

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HEADLEY WARREN is a private chalkland Nature Reserve at the north-east end of the chalk ridge which extends from Mickleham to Headley. It occupies a south-west facing slope, above the dry valley running from Juniper Hall to Headley Heath. Apart from the remnants of largely unsuccessful conifer plantations in a few positions, the site is basically a piece of unimproved chalk downland with the rich chalkland flora characteristic of the North Downs. In terms of flora and fauna, the area can be regarded as part of Mickleham Downs. It has long been a site of entomological interest, containing the area known to 19th century entomologists as "Hilly Field, Mickleham" (Macworth-Praed, *pers. comm.*). This is where Power in 1862 took the first British specimen of *Borboropora kraatzi* Fuss (Linnell, 1899), a species not again found in Britain until over a hundred years later.

During the periods April to October 1994 and 1995, two flight interception traps were operated on the site, positioned approximately 150 metres apart, trap A at OS grid reference TQ 191542 and trap B (set only in 1995) at TQ 189541, respectively. The traps were set up and operated as previously described (Owen, 1993a). They were orientated to be essentially at right angles to the prevailing wind which blows up the partially wooded valley from the south-west.

A total of over 4000 beetles were caught, comprising 367 species. The majority of the species were typical chalkland species presumably part of the fauna of the Warren but some were dead-wood species which may have flown or been blown from some distance. Most were relatively common species but a few are worthy of the special mention below because they appear not to have been recorded from Surrey, at least for many years, because they are rated nationally noteworthy (Hyman & Parsons, 1992 & 1994) or because they are relative newcomers to the British Isles. Two local lists of beetles have been used to help put records into perspective. The first is the list of 499 beetle species recorded (Owen, 1993a) during the operation of a flight interception trap in Oyster Wood, Headley, a wooded site approximately 1000 m to the north-east of the nearest trap site on Headley Warren. The second is a manuscript list of the beetles of the Box Hill-Mickleham Downs area, compiled from published and unpublished records and containing 1350 species (Owen, 1996 *unpub.*).

This paper deals with 20 of the species caught. A complete list of the species taken will be sent on request to the author.

Notes on selected species

The letters A and B in parenthesis after the species name in these notes indicate the trap in which the specimens were caught. The numbers indicate the number of specimens caught.

HISTERIDAE

Acritus homoeopathicus Wollaston : 1994 May (A, 5); 1995 May (A, 2), July (B, 2).

This species was not noted in Britain until 1938 though it is generally regarded as a native species. It has most commonly been recorded from old bonfire sites which is the habitat in which I first met with it in the Mickleham area in 1991 (Owen, 1994). It seems to fly readily for it was among the species recorded from the flight-interception trap at Oyster Wood and was present in 1993 and in 1994 in a partially burnt, grass compost heap on Epsom Downs (Owen, Allen, Booth and Luff, 1997).

LEIODIDAE

Colon zebei Kraatz : 1994 August (A, 1)

Fowler (1888) recorded this species from various Surrey localities including Mickleham (Champion) but I am unaware of any recent Surrey records. Hyman & Parsons (1994) list post-1969 records for only two vice-counties – East Suffolk and Carnarvonshire.

SCYDMAENIDAE

Euconnus duboisi Méquignon : 1994 June (A, 1); August (A, 1)

This species was first recorded in Britain by Last (1945) on the basis of two specimens found respectively at Banstead and Capel in Surrey. Concluding that it was an undescribed species, Last gave it the name *E. murielae* but by the time of publication of the latest British Check List (Pope, 1977) it had been shown that *murielae* was a synonym of *duboisi* described from specimens taken by M. Dubois at Versailles (Méquignon, 1929). The species has subsequently been recorded from a number of sites in the southern half of England, often in synanthropic situations suggesting that it is an introduced species.

STAPHYLINIDAE

Dropephylla devillei Bernhauer (= *grandiloqua* (Luze)): 1994 October (A, 2)

Formerly, this species was considered confined to Scotland (Tottenham, 1954) but it has extended its range southwards in the second half of this century like a number of other species previously known only from Scotland (Welch & Hammond, 1996). I am unaware of any other Surrey records.

Hypopycna rufula (Erichson) : 1994 October (A, 1)

In Britain, this beetle is known only from West Kent, Surrey, East Sussex, South Devon and Worcestershire (Owen, 1993b). The species appears well established in the Mickleham area for I took two examples on 26.x.85 under

the bark of a fallen beech tree on Mickleham Downs about 400 m to the west of the trap site and a specimen turned up in the flight – interception trap in Oyster Wood in October 1993.

***Anotylus hamatus* (Fairmaire & Laboulbène)** : 1995 May (B, 3 males)

This species has mainly been recorded from chalk grassland. I have taken it from grass tufts on a south-facing chalk slope at Box Hill and by sieving dead leaves among grass on chalk near Epsom.

***A. saulcyi* (Pandellé)** : 1995 May (A, 2 males)

Most records for this beetle have been from mole's nests but it has also been found in the nests of other mammals such as badgers (Lott, 1995). There was a heavy rabbit population at Headley Warren at the time the traps were operating and the beetles probably bred in rabbit nests.

***Oxytelus migrator* Fauvel** : 1995 April (B, 1)

This originally oriental species was first noted in Europe, in Finland in 1975 since when it has spread westwards in Europe (Lohse & Lucht, 1989). It was recorded in Battersea Park, London in 1988 (Hammond, *pers. com.*) and in Clarke Gardens, Liverpool in the same year (Eccles, *in litt.*).

***Dacrila pruinosa* (Kraatz)** : 1995 April (A, 1)

There are very few records for this species in Britain. It was introduced to the British list by Champion (1897) on the basis of a few specimens taken by Elliman at Chesham, Bucks. Subsequently, Champion (1898) took specimens on chalk downland at Guildford, Surrey “..running on the bare chalk in the sunshine after a shower...”. These are the only two published records of which I am aware. My friend, Mr Allen tells me, however, that there are specimens from Box Hill, Surrey and Otford, Kent in Harwood's collection, taken about 1920. More recently, on 29.v.82 my friend Mr Johnson took a specimen in a chalk pit at Little Blakenham, Suffolk in similar circumstances to those taken by Champion (1898).

***Ceritaxa pervagata* Benick (= *dilaticornis* Kraatz)** : 1994 June (A, 1), 1995 July (A, 1)

This is the species known in Britain until recently as *C. dilaticornis* Kraatz (Hammond *pers. com.*). It was recorded from Mickleham by Champion and Power (Fowler, 1888) and it occurred in the trap in Oyster Wood but I am unaware of any other published records for Surrey.

***Alevonota aurantiaca* Fauvel** : 1994 April (A, 2)

This is a species primarily of chalk downland. Most records refer to specimens taken singly by sweeping in the late afternoon or evening, in spring or early summer. To account for this behaviour, it has been postulated that the species is basically a subterranean species. Direct evidence for this lifestyle was obtained by the capture of a specimen in an underground pitfall trap set in a garden on the edge of the chalk at Ashted, Surrey in June 1996 (Owen, 1997). This is a rare species recorded only from Dorset, Hampshire

and Surrey. Allen (1991) has reviewed records up to that time. I can add the record of a specimen found under a stone at Arundel, West Sussex on 14.v.79.

A. gracilent (Erichson) : 1994 April (A, 1)

Like the preceding, this is probably a subterranean species, appearing above the surface for a limited period in spring and early summer. There are old records for Surrey but none that I can find for the period after 1969.

Aleochara discipennis Mulsant & Rey : 1994 April (A, 2), June (A, 2), July (A, 1); 1995 April (B, 1), May (A, 1), June (A, 4), July (B, 9)

The ecology of this species remains to be determined. Other members of the genus are known to be predatory (as larvae) on early stages of diptera species. Adults have been found in various types of herbivore dung and in carrion. My first specimen was shaken out of a dead rook in Windsor Great Park, Berkshire. As far as Headley Warren goes, there were horses and sheep grazing in fields within a short distance of the trap sites. A number of specimens were trapped in Oyster Wood. There appear to be no other recent Surrey records.

A. verna Say : 1995 May (B, 2), July (A, 2)

Because of doubts about their identity, *Aleochara* specimens which I had taken at various sites including Headley Warren and which matched some tentatively identified as *A. pauxilla* (Owen, 1990), were recently submitted on request to Dr Ch. Maus, Freiberg and to Dr R.C. Welch who both returned them as *A. verna*. The opportunity is taken here of recording *A. verna* formally as a Surrey insect.

BUPRESTIDAE

Trachys scrobiculatus Kiesenwetter : 1994 April (A, 1), June (A, 1), August (A, 2); 1995 May (A, 2; B, 8), June (A, 1; B, 1), July (A, 4; B, 2)

This is a species of open chalk downland of the North and South Downs where it is associated with ground ivy. I have found it frequently by sieving moss on various parts of Box Hill.

EUCNEMIDAE

Hylis olexai (Palm) : 1995 July (A, 1)

This eucnemid appears to be well established in the Mickleham area. Interestingly, the first British specimen was taken at Box Hill in 1951 though the captor – a visiting Finnish entomologist, did not realise that the beetle was not then on the British list (Allen, 1954). I found a dead specimen in a fallen beech tree at the base of Mickleham Downs on 8.ix.90. On 23.vi.93, my friend, Dr Booth, found a number running over a spruce stump in the same area and very kindly gave me one. A recent publication (Mendel, 1996) shows that this beetle is known in Britain only from Hampshire, Sussex, Kent and Surrey.

DERODONTIDAE

Laricobius erichsoni Rosen : 1995 April (A, 1)

This species was recorded new to Britain on the basis of a specimen taken at Boyton, Suffolk in 1971 (Hammond & Barham, 1982). It was deliberately released in Kent in 1972 as a biological control agent against a conifer aphid but this was after it had been found at Boyton which is reason to consider its appearance in Suffolk the consequence of natural spread to Britain. It was recorded from central Scotland in 1982 (Lyszkowski, 1987), southern Scotland in 1987 (Sinclair, 1989) and from Speyside in 1995 (Booth, *pers. comm.*; Hodge, *pers. comm.*). This appears to be the first record from Surrey. Its apparent absence so far from other southern counties or from the Midlands suggests, perhaps, that its appearance in Scotland is a result of direct immigration from Scandinavia rather than spread from Suffolk.

ANTHRIBIDAE

Choragus sheppardi Kirby : 1994 June (A, 1)

This is a species of woodlands and old hedgerows where its larvae develop in dead ivy branches. There are many ivy-covered trees in the valley leading up, to Headley and the specimens may have come from these. The species has been recorded from many counties in the past, including Surrey. Recently, however, it has become much less common and I have been unable to find any recent Surrey records.

CURCULIONIDAE

Smicronyx reichi (Gyllenhal) : 1995 May (B, 1), September (B, 1), October (B, 10)

Another species of chalk downland, associated with comms.: centaury and, possibly, also yellow-wort. I beat a specimen from a crab-apple tree at Box Hill on 26.v.86 and shook another out of moss on White Down, Surrey on 3.xi.93. Recorded from various southern counties in the past but only from East Sussex and Surrey in recent years (Hyman & Parsons, 1992).

Trichosirocalus (= *Ceuthorhynchidius*) *horridus* (Panzer) : 1994 April (A, 1)

This beetle is associated with various thistle species. There are old published records for Surrey but I am unaware of any recent, published records. Dr R.G.Booth, however, took a specimen on Mickleham Downs in April 1992 and another in June 1993.

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R.G. Booth, Mr T. Eccles, Mr P. Hodge and Mr C. Johnson for information on their own relevant captures. Lastly, I must thank my wife for her unfailing help in constructing the traps, setting them up and retrieving the catch.

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The wasp-nest beetle *Metoecus paradoxus* L. (Col.: Rhipiphoridae) in north-east Hampshire

A deceased male specimen of this curious insect was found in a mv moth trap located in my garden at Farnborough, Hampshire (OS grid reference SU 858755) on 30 July this year (1997). It was the second occurrence of this species in the trap, the first one, also a male, was noted on 9 July 1995.

Both specimens arrived on warm, humid nights during periods when many wasps *Vespula vulgaris* L. were active. Twelve wasps were recorded in the trap on 30 July 1997 and three on 9 July 1995 (increasing that summer to fifty a night by 1st August).— R.W. PARFITT, 29 Manor Road, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 7EX.

BOOK REVIEWS

Scythrididae by Bengt Å. Bengtsson in P. Huemer, O. Karsholt and L. Lyneborg (Eds.) *Microlepidoptera of Europe, Volume 2*. 301 pages, 14 colour plates, 419 text figures. 248 x 175 mm, hardbound. ISBN 87 88757 11 0. Apollo Books, Kirkeby Sand 19, DK-5771 Stenstrup, Denmark, 1997. 500 Danish Kroner plus postage (review copy weighs just over 1 Kg without packaging).

This is the second volume in the series *Microlepidoptera of Europe*; the first volume, covering the Pterophoridae, was reviewed during 1996 by Paul Sokoloff in *Ent. Rec.* **108**: 172-174.

The Scythrididae have a world-wide distribution and are even encountered on isolated islands, where they often show special features which differ from the rest of the family. However, with only about a dozen species known from the British Isles one may wonder how this book can be of use to British lepidopterists, given that our species will in any event shortly be covered in volume 4 of *The moths and butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* from Harley Books. In my own view the answer to this is quite simply that because the family contains so many species which are quite difficult to identify and because a large proportion of them have some association with